

while this stable and honourable centre of financial life exists ; while, equally signal and memorable, the nation's fateful battleships haunt every water, instinct with the pauseless energy and daring of noble seamen; and while her sons upon the field retain the fine type and traditions of the gallant men, whose patient courage, whose cheerful endurance, whose humanity amid barbarity, are immemorially engraved upon the grateful records of the Land.

Towards the close of August, several conferences took place between the Treasury, bankers, accepting houses and merchants, and an arrangement was devised for dealing with the foreign exchanges and the involved cultivation and normal condition of the import and export of commodities. That plan included the provision of loans by the Bank of England to acceptors of bills with which approved pre-Moratorium bills could be discharged on maturity : these acceptors were made bound to collect from their foreign clients their overdue debts as speedily as practicable, and these funds were at once to be applied in repayment of the advances granted by the banks. The rate of interest upon these advances was fixed at 2 per cent in excess of the current bank charge. I should advert to another provision for facilitating fresh business and the movements of produce and merchandise from, and to, all parts of the world, which introduced the joint-stock banks as members of the scheme. These banks, in co-operation where needed with the Bank of England and the Treasury, were, subject to reasonable inquiry, to make advances to customers for the purpose of satisfying their acceptances on maturity where the necessary funds had not been provided in due time by the clients to the acceptors.

[I omit a fourth Proclamation which, containing an error, was revoked by a subsequent Proclamation.]

The Courts (Emergency Powers) Act (1914) was passed to-day. This measure differed from the Proclamations—which draw a definite line between debts that might be postponed and debts which

must as usual, be discharged—by suspending the customary powers of creditors in certain cases until they had convinced a judge that the debtors' inability to settle was not occasioned by the war. The Act provided that no